



Emmanu'-EL Apostolic Gospel Academy

Choir in the BBC Choir of the Year 2010 Competition



About the Competition

The BBC Choir of the Year is the UK's largest singing competition which was started in 1984 as a platform to celebrate the best in amateur choral singing. The Choir of the Year brings together singing groups of all ages to battle it out for a place in the Grand Final at London's Royal Festival Hall in November 2010, which will be broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and televised on BBC Four.

Every two years thousands of singers come together to perform music in many different styles. The preliminary round and the area selection takes place at venues across the UK in Spring 2010. A team of expert judges will consider each choir's musicality, performance and technical achievement and give live feedback. Only the best groups in each category - Children, Youth, Adult and Open will go on to compete in the finals and only one will be crowned Choir of the Year 2010. This year representing the great city of God Leicester; is the

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EAGA children's and adult's choir. For further information click on the following link:
<http://www.chcoiroftheyear.co.uk/support.htm>

About the Choir

The EAGA adult's choir was formed in 2003, borne out of the Emmanu'-EL Apostolic Church (EAC). In October 2004 the choir became affiliated with De Montfort University (DMU) where it is now based, meeting 2-3 times a week on the University's campus. The choir is comprised mainly of students from DMU, with others attending the University of Leicester as well as colleges and junior schools in Leicester.

The work that the Academy does involves the following:

Outreach work within the community of Leicester

Supporting home and international students

Empowerment through Performing arts

School workshops

After school club

Fund raising

The choir has members who are former drug addicts and criminals one of them is even a former prostitute. Many of the members have been rehabilitated through the Christian teachings of Jesus Christ that are taught at EAC and EAGA and have empowered them to be productive members of the community and to obtain professional qualifications.

Children's Choir and EAGA in the Community

The EAGA children's choir are aged 0 – 18. The 6 – 11 year olds were selected from the choir to compete in the youth category. Samworth Academy is one of the local schools where EAGA already do outreach work teaching the children music and academic subjects. The entry of the children's choir in the competition is an example of the types of initiative and partnership work that EAGA is involved with in the community. Most of the children are from the Saffron Lane and Eyres Monsell estates where there are high levels of depravity, with Saffron Lane having the highest level of teenage pregnancies in Britain and Eyres Monsell falling within the Government's definition of the 10% most deprived areas in Britain.

The core ethos of EAGA as a Christian organisation includes, education, good morals, discipline and respect. This competition provided another opportunity for local children to be further empowered by broadening their horizons as well as developing their team work, communication skills and confidence. The trip to Manchester for the competition is also an example of the work of EAGA that takes them outside of Leicester.

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The children's choir had a very limited amount of time to prepare and only managed to have a few joint rehearsals. The category they were in was extremely competitive and on the day they put in a tremendously brave performance. The judges were impressed, however all of the choirs that competed were of a very high standard and unfortunately the children's choir did not make it through to the next round of the competition. The children all enjoyed themselves and gained much from their first experience which will set them in good stead for future competitions.

The Start of a Journey

Saturday 20th February 2010 marked a momentous event in the journey of EAGA; as the children and adult's choir set off for the first leg of the competition which was held at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester. The day was divided into a morning and afternoon session, with the children performing in the morning and the adults performing in the afternoon.

After prayer, the EAGA adult's choir set off for the event; immaculately dressed in their famous black and white with the men wearing specially made black and white shoes. The journey to Manchester was a peaceful and jolly affair with the choir in fine fettle.

On arrival at the venue they took their seats in an orderly manner along with the other eight choirs who were to compete in the event. It was a packed auditorium with a great atmosphere. The EAGA choir was entered in the adult's category up against two other choirs for one place into the next round.

The EAGA Choir Team and the Performance

The musicians for the EAGA choir were the accomplished 14 year old Brother Jordan Anderson and violinist Sister Carika Weldon who is a new member of EAGA. The conductor for both the adults and children's choir was the exceptional Brother Emmanuel Adebayo. The song performed by the choir is called 'Total Praise' composed by Richard Smallwood.

The choir filed onto the stage with confidence and poise as a well drilled unit in black and white and immediately captured the full attention of the audience. One spectator told how she was moved to tears and one of the judges in his summary of the performance declared that he was so captivated; he had forgotten to write his comments for the first 4 minutes of a song that lasted 6 minutes. As the choir departed the stage the choir delivered a masterstroke on the spur of the moment, breaking out into a catchy Zulu rendition entitled 'Avulekile Amasango' which means the gates have been opened in heaven. This brought further rapturous applause and brought the house down.

The EAGA choir throughout the event was easily the most vocal in their support for the other choirs; whose performances were of a very high standard. Finally the judges announced that the EAGA choir had made it through into the next round and would be removed from the adult's category and entered into the *open* category which is the most difficult of them all. There were wild celebrations and congratulations came from all the other choirs who were all

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supportive of each other throughout the event. The fantastic atmosphere captured the spirit in which such competitions are held.

The Grand Finale

As everyone was about to depart, the EAGA choir arose from their seats and unexpectedly sang another song: 'Oh Happy Day' which accurately summarised the day. All the other choirs joined in, along with the judges and presenter. This created a joyous celebration of a perfect day and a fitting finale to the competition. EAGA had made a massive impact at the event which certainly will not be forgotten by the judges, organisers, their fellow competitors and peers. It was the day the choir came of age and made many friends in Manchester; ministering the name of Jesus, reaching hearts and minds. The EAGA Choir boarded the team coach and made a triumphant return to Leicester: the City of God....